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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma, comprising:

generating a plasma in a processing chamber in which the specimen is disposed; and

processing the specimen with the plasma generated in the processing chamber; ~~and, wherein the processing of the specimen comprises:~~

performing contaminant analysis, which includes:

an irradiation operation for projecting and scanning a light beam into the processing chamber through an observation window of the processing chamber;

a detection operation for detecting a reflected light signal corresponding to a reflected light of the projected light beam which is reflected from an inside wall of the processing chamber, the reflected light signal being detected by separating a wall-reflected light component from light emanated from the plasma; and ~~light reflected from the inside wall by use of a spectroscope; and~~

a signal processing operation for obtaining information on a state of contamination of the inside wall of the processing chamber, by processing ~~a the wall-reflected light signal~~ obtained at the detection operation, by referring to an electronic database storing predetermined relationships between candidate signals obtained obtainable from said detection of light from said inside wall and corresponding states of inside-wall contamination, to derive a state of contamination corresponding to the wall-reflected light signal, from the electronic database. ~~of said inside wall.~~

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2. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, comprising
a control operation for controlling the plasma processing of the specimen, based on the information on the state of contamination of the inside wall obtained at the signal processing operation.

3. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, wherein at the detection operation, a specular reflection component of the reflected light from the inside wall of the processing chamber is formed by an imaging optical system, and detected by a detector.

4. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 3, wherein at the detection operation, when the specular reflection component of the reflected light is formed by an imaging optical system through the observation window and detected by a detector, a light generated from the plasma in the processing chamber is cut off by a filter.

5. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, wherein at the irradiation operation, ~~when~~ the beam is projected into the inside of the processing chamber and scanned so as to be projected onto a plurality of locations on the inside wall of the processing chamber.

6. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, wherein projecting the light beam into the inside of the

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processing chamber at the irradiation operation and detecting the reflected light at the detection operation are conducted through the same observation window.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, wherein at the detection operation, the reflected light from the inside wall of the processing chamber varies in accordance with a variation in the ~~a~~ state of irregularity of the inside wall of the processing chamber.

8. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, wherein at the irradiation operation, intensity of the light beam is modulated by a desired frequency and the light beam is projected into the inside of the processing chamber through the observation window.

9. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 8, wherein at the signal processing operation, information on the state of contamination of the inside wall of the processing chamber is obtained by extracting a light component which has a frequency which is the same as the desired frequency utilized for modulation.

10. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, wherein at the detection operation, a light image limited by a diaphragm placed at an imaging position of the imaging optical system is received by a detector.

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11. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 1, wherein at the irradiation operation, the light beam to be projected into the inside of the processing chamber has a desired wavelength component, and at the detection operation, the desired wavelength component is separated from the reflected light.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma, comprising:

generating a plasma in a processing chamber in which a specimen is disposed;

processing the specimen with the plasma generated in the processing chamber;

performing contaminant analysis, which includes: wherein the processing of the specimen comprises:

projecting a light beam into the inside of the processing chamber through an observation window;

splitting light reflected from the inside of the processing chamber in response to the projected light beam and passed through the observation window, into at least suspended-material-reflected light components and wall-reflected light components;
~~two components;~~

obtaining information on suspended foreign material in the processing chamber by detecting a ~~first one of the~~ suspended-material-reflected light components of the split light using a ~~first~~ suspension-detecting optical unit arranged

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to detect the suspended-material-reflected light components with respect to predetermined positions within a volume of said plasma; and

obtaining information on a state of contamination of an inside wall of the processing chamber by detecting ~~a second one of the~~ wall-reflected light components of the split light using a second-wall-detecting optical unit arranged to detect the wall-reflected light components with respect to predetermined positions on said inside wall;

wherein the obtaining information on the state of contamination refers to an electronic database storing predetermined relationships between candidate wall-reflected light components and corresponding states of inside-wall contamination, to derive the state of contamination corresponding to the wall-reflected light components, from the electronic database.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 12, comprising controlling the plasma processing of the specimen, based on information on the suspended foreign material in the processing chamber as obtained by the ~~first~~ suspension-detecting optical unit, and based on information on the state of contamination of the inside wall of the processing chamber as obtained by the ~~second~~ wall-detecting optical unit.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 12, wherein in the projecting, ~~the~~ a light beam intensity of the light beam is modulated by a desired frequency and the light beam is projected into the inside of the processing chamber.

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15. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 14, wherein the obtaining information on the suspended foreign material in the processing chamber is obtained by extracting a light component of a desired frequency from the ~~first one of the~~ suspended-material-reflected light components of the split light.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 14, wherein the obtaining information on the state of contamination of the inside wall of the processing chamber is obtained by extracting a light component of a desired frequency from the ~~second one of the~~ wall-reflected light components of the split light.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 12, wherein both of the light beam projected into the inside of the processing chamber, and the light reflected from the inside of the processing chamber, pass through the same observation window.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 12, wherein at the obtaining of the information on the state of contamination of the inside wall of the processing chamber by detecting the ~~second one of the~~ wall-reflected light components of the split light, a ~~scattered reflected light component from the inside wall of the processing chamber is the~~ suspended-material-reflected light components are cut off by a spatial filter.

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19. - 35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma, comprising:

generating a plasma in a processing chamber in which the specimen is disposed; and

processing the specimen with the plasma generated in the processing chamber; and, wherein

performing contaminant analysis, which includes: the processing of the specimen comprises:

an irradiation operation for projecting and scanning a light beam into the processing chamber through an observation window of the processing chamber;

a detection operation for detecting a reflected light signal corresponding to a reflected light of the projected light beam which is reflected from an inside wall of the processing chamber, the reflected light signal being detected by separating a wall-reflected light component from light emanated from the plasma; and ~~light reflected from the inside wall by use of a spectroscope; and~~

a signal processing operation for obtaining information on a state of contamination of the inside wall of the processing chamber, by processing a the wall-reflected light signal obtained at the detection operation by referring to an electronic database means for storing predetermined relationships between candidate signals obtained obtainable from said detection of light from said inside wall and corresponding states of inside-wall contamination, to derive a state of contamination

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corresponding to the wall-reflected light signal, from the electronic database. of said
inside wall.

37. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, comprising
a control operation for controlling the plasma processing of the specimen, based on the information on the state of contamination of the inside wall obtained at the signal processing operation.

38. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, wherein at the detection operation, a specular reflection component of the reflected light from the inside wall of the processing chamber is formed by an imaging optical system, and detected by a detector.

39. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 38, wherein at the detection operation, when the specular reflection component of the reflected light is formed by an imaging optical system through the observation window and detected by a detector, a light generated from the plasma in the processing chamber is cut off by a filter.

40. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, wherein at the irradiation operation, ~~when~~ the beam is projected into the inside of the processing chamber and scanned so as to be projected onto a plurality of locations on the inside wall of the processing chamber.

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41. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, wherein projecting the light beam into the inside of the processing chamber at the irradiation operation and detecting the reflected light at the detection operation are conducted through the same observation window.

42. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, wherein at the detection operation, the reflected light from the inside wall of the processing chamber varies in accordance with a variation in the a state of irregularity of the inside wall of the processing chamber.

43. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, wherein at the irradiation operation, intensity of the light beam is modulated by a desired frequency and the light beam is projected into the inside of the processing chamber through the observation window.

44. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 43, wherein at the signal processing operation, information on the state of contamination of the inside wall of the processing chamber is obtained by extracting a light component which has a frequency which is the same as the desired frequency utilized for modulation.

45. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, wherein at the detection operation, a light image

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limited by a diaphragm placed at an imaging position of the imaging optical system is received by a detector.

46. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a specimen using a plasma according to Claim 36, wherein at the irradiation operation, the light beam to be projected into the inside of the processing chamber has a desired wavelength component, and at the detection operation, the desired wavelength component is separated from the reflected light.

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